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ABSTRACT

Many people are anxious about values, morality, and religion in the schools. Business, political, religious, and educational leaders are concerned; confusion is widespread. This document aims at assisting interested parties to understand better the source of some of the difficulties faced by parents, school board members, teachers, legislators, and others who confront these difficulties. It also offers suggestions to those who desire to foster traditional American values, and argues for replacing the view that all value choices may be correct with principles of right and wrong that transcend personal desires or social norms. The paper is divided into three parts: (1) "What Is the Problem? (Questions and Answers)"; (2) "How Did the World Get To Be Like This? (Understanding the Modern Context)"; and (3) "What Can I Do to Foster Traditional American Values? (Constructive Steps that Make a Difference)." Twenty-eight endnotes are included. (Author/LBG)

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VALUES, MORALITY, AND RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

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MONOGRAPH #1
Education Guidelines Series

VALUES, MORALITY, AND RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

Many people are anxious about values, morality, and religion in our schools. Business, political, religious and educational leaders are concerned; confusion is widespread. This brief document aims at assisting interested parties to better understand the source of some of the difficulties faced by parents, schoolboard members, teachers, legislators, and others who confront these difficulties. It also offers suggestions to those who desire to foster traditional American values.

(The ASCD report *Moral Education in the Life of the School*, 1988, and *The Ethics of American Youth: A Warning and a Call to Action*, 1990, prepared by the Josephson Institute of Ethics are representative of hundreds of contemporary studies and reports calling attention to the foregoing concerns.)

Part I
What is the Problem?
(Questions and Answers)

Part II
How Did the World Get to be Like This?
(Understanding the Modern Context)

Part III
What Can I Do to Foster Traditional American Values?
(Constructive Steps That Make a Difference)

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c 1991

Part I
What is the Problem?
(Questions and Answers)

Q. Why is there so much confusion and conflict over values-related issues?

A. As moral agents, people choose what they want to believe according to the way they see the world. They make their choices from the different circumstances or traditions in which they find themselves. Furthermore, every person is unique and the choices we make vary according to this uniqueness. How we justify our individual choices also contributes to differences in values-related discussions, since people vary in the way they defend their decisions. (Part II provides a brief description of how this relates to the school and contemporary American society.)

Language also contributes to the difficulties. We have no clear, single, definition for such words as values, morals, ethics, character, and religion. These commonly used terms often appear to mean the same thing. However, they do not and because people use different assumptions the meanings people give to these terms may differ greatly. For example, to one person the word *moral* may mean doing whatever one wants to do, to another it may mean conforming to what the group feels should be done, and to another it is doing what God requires.

Q. Why are meanings of these value-related words so complex?

A. Values-related terms not only connect to different assumptions, they have multiple meanings. For example, the use of the term *value* in school curriculum may refer to:

a. A cognitive definition. (What is a *value*?)
b. A process. (How do we acquire a *value*?)
c. Results of choices. (Which *values* do people choose?)
d. Our standards for selecting values. (Why should we choose particular *values*?)
e. Particular responsibilities or stewardships. (Who should convey *values* to others?)
f. Location for values education--home, church, school. (Where should *values* be acquired?)
g. Readiness and propriety. (When should *values* be taught?)

A similar range of meanings can be attached to words like *morals*, *ethics*, *character*, and *religion*. Clear communication is needed to increase understanding. We may not be able to come up with a single definition, but we can clarify what we mean when we use a particular word. This is an important goal for both leaders and participants who engage in values-related discussions.

Q. Doesn't objective scientific evidence prove that it is better when people believe a certain way?

A. No. Although some beliefs are better than others, scientific research has not shown how we acquire values or the best process for teaching morality. Theories of morality are based on conflicting assumptions about man's origin, nature, and destiny. Decisions related to methods for character education are ultimately based on personal preferences rooted in religious, social, or philosophical commitments. (See Part II for examples of a variety of these responses.)

Q. Why have the controversies over values education become so intense recently?

A. Near the turn of the century our society adopted new assumptions for establishing values in our society. This shift in assumptions formalized in the universities between 1880 and 1920. Since that time the power structure in our society has changed to comply with these new assumptions. The impact of this shift during the past three decades has been dramatic.

Walter Lippmann, a well-known journalist, explained this change to the American people in these words: "Modernity destroys the disposition to believe that behind the visible world of physical objects and human institutions there is a supernatural kingdom from which ultimately all laws, all judgments, all rewards, all punishments, and all compensations are derived." For those who accept this view, Lippmann said, the modern spirit is nothing less than treason to God. On the other hand, belief in this supernatural kingdom appears to the modernist as a grandiose fiction, a

projection of human needs and desires, but not an accurate view of reality. The view of the secular humanist, Lippmann explains, is that the popular faith does not prove *the existence* of God and a supernatural domain, but only the presence of a *desire* that such objects should exist. "In exploring the modern problem it is necessary consciously and clearly to make a choice between these diametrically opposite points of view. The choice is fundamental and exclusive, and it determines all the conclusions which follow." There is no middle ground.[1]

The modern position explains all reality as physical matter acting on physical matter. It ignores traditional religion and its belief in God, as well as a world composed of both spirit and matter. Morality, it explains, originates with man or nature, not with God. To suppose that anything can originate from a dimension that is presumed not to exist is considered irrational. (A description of this shift in premises is presented in Part II of this document.)

Q. Why should this shift in basic assumptions concern anyone?

A. (1) Rejecting the existence of a supernatural and absolute source of standards means that morality becomes relative. Right and wrong are defined by natural, social, or individual preferences rather than moral imperatives. (2) Healthy communities and effective schools depend on strong families. The family unit is weakened when situational ethics replace moral imperatives. School textbooks no longer promote the traditional family; terms like *husband*, *wife*, *marriage*, and *wedding* do not appear in some social studies texts. The family is defined as people living together rather than a father, mother, and children bound by legal and religious vows. Career preparation more than homemaking skills is the focus in many home economics courses. It is estimated that one in four babies is born out of wedlock and half of all school children come from single parent households. (3) The ultimate logic of this modern position leads to a frightening prospect. If society assumes God and the supernatural domain do not exist, it is possible to define believers as insane, because they believe in things that do not exist. Similar conditions have existed in the past in which incarceration or death was the penalty for believers. *Horizontalists* (those who reject God and the supernatural) cannot logically endorse or seriously acknowledge events premised on *vertical* suppositions.

Q. Is this why the public school curriculum seldom mentions traditional religion and morality rooted in transcendent values?

A. Yes, and the pattern appears over the last century. Nearly all references to traditional, vertical religion have disappeared from the curriculum. For example, when reporting the expedition of Columbus to the western hemisphere, the D. C. Heath American history text of 1891 quotes from his journal: "God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth . . .and showed me the spot where to find it. Let the king and queen . . . render thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has granted us so great a victory." The 1952 edition of this text reports that "Columbus said that with God's help they'd keep sailing until they reached land." In the 1966 edition, it simply states that "Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492."[2]

The founding fathers did not want to mingle sectarian religious preference with civil government. Too often one religious society is fostered and another limited in its spiritual privileges. They wanted to protect, not deny the religious rights of citizens. This belief underlies the so-called "separation doctrine" that was intended to safeguard citizens against sectarian indoctrination in government settings, not to restrict the study of religion and morality derived from religion in the community and the school. Some people today favor removing all references to religion and morality based on religion from the public school curriculum, but this was not the intent of the founders.

Q. But isn't it unconstitutional to teach about religion in the public school

A. No. The rulings of the U. S. Supreme Court have indicated that public school education may include teaching about religion. However, the approach has to be academic and not devotional. As long as teachers do not seek to promote student acceptance of any one religion, schools can strive to enhance a student's awareness of religions.[3]

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Q. Is the American heritage actually rooted in the premise that man has a personal relationship with God?

A. Yes. Historical evidence is abundant. The U. S. Declaration of Independence explicitly acknowledges this premise. All fifty state constitutions use language that acknowledges our relationship to God. For example, the preamble to the state Constitution of Indiana reads: **"WE, the people of the state of Indiana, grateful to ALMIGHTY GOD for the free exercise of the right to choose our own form of government, do ordain this Constitution."** The California preamble is similar: **"We, the people of California, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure and perpetuate its blessings, do establish this Constitution."** Utah's constitution begins: **"Grateful to Almighty God for life and liberty, we, the people of Utah, in order to secure and perpetuate the principles of free government, do ordain and establish this Constitution."**

The context in which we should read and interpret these documents is clear. Our school curriculum and legal rationale, however, tend to ignore this context. Most educators now believe it is inappropriate or illegal to teach about this relationship; religion has been carefully edited out of our public school curriculum. Most teachers and students do not know these statements are in their state constitutions. Fear of administrative criticism or lawsuits abounds.

Part II
How Did the World Get to be Like This?
(Understanding the Modern Context)

The Values Controversy is Rooted in an Ancient Problem

The current debate over values is an old problem dressed in new clothes. Rooted in our history, the basic conflict can be expressed in a single sentence: Do we have both a spiritual and a physical dimension to our existence or just a physical dimension? In other words, How should reality be defined? This debate appears to have arisen in nearly every culture. Modern man has described these two views as the *supernatural* and the *natural*.[4] The Greeks expressed these conflicting views as the *mantic* and the *sophic*. Students of ancient Judaism refer to this same issue as the *vertical* (man to God) and the *horizontal* (man to man) perspectives.

The choice we make on this question sets the course for education and affects nearly every decision related to values issues in the schools. It influences the way we define and pursue all three scholarly traditions, i.e., studies related to (a) man's relationship to God, (b) man's relationship to man, and (c) man's relationship to things. This in turn shapes all aspects of our daily lives.

According to the supernatural view there is a reality that transcends our physical world. The supernatural view acknowledges both a spiritual and a physical dimension to our existence. The universe is seen as composed of two basic building blocks--(a) spirit and (b) physical matter. Since man is more than a physical organism, explanations of phenomena may be explained in several different ways: by matter acting on matter, matter acting on spirit, spirit acting on matter, or spirit acting on spirit. This is the traditional way of thinking about man and life in western culture.

In contrast, the modern perspective (naturalistic) maintains that the universe consists of only one building block: physical matter, with no realities beyond the temporal domain. From this position, all issues are explained by matter acting on matter. Modern school curriculum teaches that psychology can be reduced to biology, biology to chemistry, and chemistry to physics. Man is a physical organism, nothing more. This is the view that prevails in contemporary public education curriculum. Modern definitions of morality (what is right and wrong) are extensions of this premise.

The conflict between these two views is at the root of our dilemma on moral and character education because modern society essentially rejects the vertical view, that man has a relationship

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with God. The power structure that shapes today's scribal society limits itself to horizontal beliefs in man's relationship to himself, other mortals, and this physical world. From these two perspectives the origin, nature, and destiny of humankind are defined differently. Herein resides the primary conflict between the traditional religious view of our American heritage and the general thrust of contemporary education and legal practice.

Diversity of belief has always existed in our society. But the modern crises is less manageable because the old foundation for broad social consensus has been removed. In the traditional view a belief in the supernatural and the natural world are both legitimate. The modern view, however, rejects the reality of the supernatural; by definition God does not exist and values related to man's relationship to God are publicly irrelevant. There is no middle ground to share. Any belief in the vertical relationship has to be unacceptable--always. This insight is necessary to understand many of the current social and educational issues.

When people agree with conclusions that are based on a premise with which they cannot agree consensus on matters of belief is unstable. It is this 20th century condition that causes many to ask *Is consensus possible in America?*[5] As long as America is governed by the belief that accepts both a supernatural and a natural dimension of reality, the possibility of stable consensus exists. Conclusions expressed as values may legitimately be attached to both supernatural and natural suppositions. Tolerance is possible as well as unity with integrity. If the naturalist position only prevails, unity cannot exist. Divisiveness is inevitable, ultimately. The logical alternative for the exclusive naturalist is to eliminate, not tolerate the opposition. By definition the vertical believers can be considered insane, not just ignorant, because they believe in that which does not appear to exist.

An Ancient Conflict Deeply Entrenched in Modern Society

Like the American founders, the large majority of U. S. citizens today believe in both a spiritual and a temporal dimension to our existence. The language of the Declaration of Independence and all fifty state constitutions expresses or implies this two-dimensional position. On the other hand, modern textbooks, curriculum, and educational policy are generally based on a one-dimensional horizontal belief. For example, a recent survey of State Departments of Education reported that curriculum objectives related to educational values in all fifty states were couched in the horizontal or temporal, none in the spiritual, context.[6]

Because of these conflicting views, public discussions related to values, morals, and character are confusing. People are frequently caught up in this confusion without understanding its primary cause. *We often become our own worst enemies and the most useful advocates for the opposition because of fear and ignorance*. Consequently, we become entangled in hypocritical decisions and actions. Although some may personally believe in traditional vertical ideas, they unwittingly argue in favor of propositions that are designed to eliminate the very position to which they are most deeply committed. One school district official, for example, censored materials that described public virtue as viewed by the American founders because quotes from Jefferson and Franklin referred to God. Such thinking led to striking all references to God, religion, and any acknowledgments of vertical beliefs. Similarly, the leadership in another school district sought to adopt a values related curriculum that was based entirely on horizontal theory although the district represented a highly traditional and religious community . .

Classifications of Values-related Theories

Many experts have developed values theory related to morality and ethics.[7] Students of character education frequently use classifications in discussions related to these theories. One such classification acknowledges two distinct types of ethical instruction--(a) *social ethics* and (b) *individual ethics*. This distinction was summarized in one study as follows:

> *Social ethics* is concerned with social justice: helping minority groups achieve equality, maintaining humanitarian foreign policy, improving the quality of the environment. *Individual ethics*, on the other hand, is concerned with the individual person's immediate responsibility

> over his own--as opposed to the society's--action toward other individuals. . . .the United States . . . has emphasized the importance of social ethics at the expense of individual ethics.[8]

The authors go on to show that individual ethics result in people who are responsible, honest citizens. The emphases on social ethics does not lead to the same results, however. In recent decades, the United States has sacrificed the teaching of individual ethics in favor of social ethics. This trend is now manifest in current curriculum controversies. One example, is the conflict over values programs proposed for secondary schools. Another is the so-called "politically correct" factionalism that is dividing university faculties in deeply divisive debates.

Another study classifies sources of theory on morality in four general categories.[9]

	Vertical	*Horizontal*	*Horizontal*	*Horizontal*
	Traditional ("Theistic")	**Marxist** (Historical)	**Sociological** ("Scientific")	**Individualist** (Autonomous)
Basic Definition	Morality is doing what God requires.	Morality is doing what history requires in pursuit of the dialectic end.	Morality is conforming to social mores.	Morality is doing what one thinks and feels one ought to do.
Primary Assumption	God knows what is best for man and has revealed or will reveal this to him.	Within history is a "law" of progress that will lead to ultimate good.	Society knows what is best and conveys this to man.	Individuals progress by responding to their natural (physical & mental) capacities.
Consequence	Acknowledge Deity	"Deify" History	"Deify" Society	"Deify" Individual

The first column can be considered vertical, the other three are horizontal.

A third classification is philosophical in nature. A. James Reichley, for example, identifies seven value systems which he divides into two categories.[10] Four of these value systems rely in one way or another on religion:

(1) *monism*, rejecting the apparent world of material reality in favor of a totally spiritualized view of conscience;
(2) *idealism*, identifying the goals of the social group, dominant or repressed, with transcendent will;
(3) *personalism*, pursuing transcendence through individual experience;
(4) *theist-humanism*, discovering transcendent significance in the related experiences of the group.

The other three value systems, he says, require no reference to vertical religion.

(5) *egoism*, reducing all value to the drives and appetites of the individual human beings;
(6) *authoritarianism*, basing value entirely on the welfare of the social group; and
(7) *civil humanism*, attempting to balance the rights of the individual against the needs of the group without relating either to transcendent moral law.

Reichley says the "critical question for all modern democracies is whether the three secular value systems, either separately or in some combination, can provide sufficient moral basis to maintain the cohesion and vitality of a free society." He indicates that "if the answer to this question is no, as

most of the American Founders including George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, argued," then the four value systems based on vertical religion must "determine how transcendent moral authority or inspiration can be maintained in a democratic society while minimizing the risks of bigotry, fanaticism, irresponsibility, and obscurantism that some tendencies within religion have all too often fostered." His booklength study concludes with the following observation:

> The fundamental flaw of secular civil humanism as a basis for democratic values is that it fails to meet the test of intellectual credibility. . . .the founding fathers after all were right: republican government depends for its health on values that over the not-so-long run must come from religion. . . .human rights are rooted in the moral worth with which a loving Creator has endowed each human soul, and social authority is legitimized by making it answerable to transcendent moral law.[11]

From Where We Were to Where We Are

In 1870 Lester Ward, the American social theorist, formed a society to disseminate "liberal principles" and oppose "all forms of superstition." Called the National Liberal Reform League, this society initiated a publication called the *Iconoclast*. The League considered "reason and philosophy" to be the "standards" of evaluation in all matters; science was "the Great Iconoclast," the destroyer of religious tradition. They called Orthodox religion [defined as Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism] "an irreconcilable enemy of mankind." Furthermore, since "no scientific committees ever presided when a miracle was performed, we are entitled to assume that no alleged case of special providence, independent of natural law, is able to stand the test of scientific investigation."[12] This type of thinking exemplifies the modern position.

Between 1880 and 1920 the movement away from a sacred toward a secular view of life flourished in higher education. During the 1930s this movement expressed itself in numerous conferences and in documents such as the *Humanist Manifesto I*, which asserted that "the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values."

By 1973 the revision of this document boldly proclaimed "As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. . . .we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."[13]

The pervasive nature of the modern shift can be seen in the definitions given to the words "moral" or "morality" in *Webster's Dictionary* in the early 1800s compared to those in *Webster's Dictionary* today. In the early 1800s moral acts have "reference to the law of God as the standard by which their character is to be determined." Morality is "conformity of an act to the divine law." Today's dictionary makes no such statement. Rather, *Webster's* modern definition is simply "conforming to a standard that is right and good." Such standards can be both arbitrary and relative.

At Columbia Teachers College in the 1930s morality was redefined for educators as conforming to the *social mores*, adapting to one's period, place, and people. In other words "When in Rome do as the Romans do." Our institutions of higher education rejected vertical assumptions and accepted horizontal premises in their place As this perspective filtered through most of the public sector and the legal system, it created confusion in ethical matters. Right and wrong are no longer moral imperatives but are commonly perceived as simply social or individual preferences.[14]

The subtle nature of this change has slowly anesthetized the general public. We have become victims of an unwitting ignorance. The philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset, characterized our condition when he observed "We do not know what is happening to us, and that is precisely what is happening to us--the fact of not knowing what is happening to us."[15] We seem to be trapped in a net of social confusion. Friends and neighbors who otherwise agree often become unexpected adversaries whenever moral matters become the focus of discussion.

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Upon recognizing this condition in her own life, one college student said: "I feel as if I have been freed of a conflict I never understood, a conflict that 'compartmentalizes' values, 'secularizes' truth and knowledge, and separates me from a vital source of truth--God." It is this disorientation that has created a litigation haven for many associated with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Out of the social landscape a great divide has emerged in America. The change is radical; the consequences are heavily debated and the casualties are high.[16]

From Academia to the U.S. Supreme Court

J. Reuben Clark claims this dramatic shift in assumptions changed the course of American history. He argues that for 130 years (1770-1900) America was successful in preserving and developing her basic freedoms. Subsequently, she ceased to climb and began to slide and slip.[17]

John W. Whitehead describes this shift in America's legal framework. He suggests "A legal revolution has occurred. The fundamental emphases of the Framers . . . have been removed." The Federal government's powers are no longer few and defined. Through the avenue of the Courts they have become numerous and indefinite. He cites Edward S. Corwin who declared our system is no longer "a constitution of rights" but "a constitution of powers." Francis A. Schaeffer, in his foreword to Whitehead's book, agrees that "the government, the courts, the media, [and] the law . . . have largely secularized our society by force, particularly by using the courts."[18]

Christopher Wolfe documents this social and legal shift in his book *The Rise of Modern Judicial Review*. His thesis is that "there has been a gradual but dramatic shift in the character of judicial review" as constitutional interpretation has become judge-made law. Wolfe divides the history of judicial review into three phases: the traditional era (1789-1890), the transitional era 1890-1937, and the post-1937 or modern period.[19]

Wolfe's ideas are confirmed by an attorney's doctoral study completed at Brigham Young University in 1989. Analyzing Supreme Court cases from 1789 to 1987, Matthew M. F. Hilton concluded that the Court, without open acknowledgement, replaced judicial analysis founded on "theistically based Higher Law" with "agnostic, relativistic standards." Hilton notes that this diversion is counter to the "contextual framework of [all fifty] state constitutions [which] accept as valid and legally binding, a theistic Higher Law similar to that in the Declaration of Independence."[20]

Hilton's study, which examined more than 14,000 cases, also divides the transition movement into three periods but uses slightly different dates: the pre-14th Amendment period (1790-1868), the post-14th Amendment period (1868-1943), and the modern period (1943-present). His research explains not only the changing ideas in American legal thought, it also clarifies how these ideas impact on our day to day experiences. Similar conclusions are documented in David Barton's *The Myth of Separation* (1989).

Changing Views on the Source of Individual Rights and the Nature of Judicial Review

The Supreme Court now regards differently both (a) individual rights and the (b) nature of judicial review. For example, the Court has gradually abandoned a constitutional recognition, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, of a Deity that bestows upon man inalienable rights. This change resulted from the advancement of four interrelated doctrines: *first*, abandoning the concept of man's personal relationship with Deity; *second*, abandoning the idea of man's inalienable rights as granted by God; *third*, redefining equality (men are of equal value not because they are so in the eyes of God but because of their tangible possessions or government granted privileges); *fourth*, shifting from state responsibility to ensure the citizen's protection of his inalienable rights, to a Court assigned constitutionally based duty. The trend is to consider man's inalienable rights as "granted" by the government, not God, and it is up to the Court to interpret these rights.

The Court has adopted new and different standards for judicial review. These new standards are consistent with the Court's tendency to establish a purely secular basis for its decisions. First, the Court gave new and different definitions to terms such as "conscience," "natural law," "morality," and "equality." Second, the Court changed what it would accept as permissible

evidence. It moved away from a vertical (religious) worldview toward a horizontal (naturalistic) worldview. This transition is reflected in the type of evidence the court seeks and accepts.

At one time the Court determined that innate "conscience" could supersede *stare decises*--a rational argument based on previous precedent. The Court now holds that, generally, conscience is really the individual's reflection of social consensus. In jury instruction, the phrase "moral certainty" was replaced by the phrase "reasonable doubt." Jurists are now presumed to possess a rational capacity--but not a moral capacity to assist in the legal process. The Court no longer holds itself accountable to a divinely connected "conscience" that transcends reason. The earlier idea that "eternal justice . . . comes from intelligence and truth" to guide the conscience of the Court appears outdated. "Natural law" is no longer defined as allegience to a higher, theistically based set of principles or laws; natural law is now considered obedience to social consent, existing law, or custom.

Clearly, the Court's method for defining right and wrong has changed. The shift is away from what the individual should do because of a relationship to God and divinely established natural law, toward what legal institutions define as necessary. A man's spoken word seems no longer to be considered his bond (a *moral* obligation); man is to be held to his written and attested word (a *legal* responsibility). Law schools and their graduates have consistently perpetuated these new intellectual patterns of thought. The impact on school curriculum during the past fifty years is unmistakable: man's personal relationship to God is no longer acknowledged.

What is in ultimate jeopardy is our traditional American heritage. It is the *legal right* to publicly acknowledge in our homes, schools, and communities our personal relationship and gratitude to that "Almighty Being" whom President George Washington fervently supplicated in his first inaugural address. Today there is a trend to foreclose, if not forbid, personal public acknowledgement of "the Great Author of every public and private good." Surely our generation and our children are no less indebted to Deity than the Father of our country. Washington concluded that "no people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States." He testified that "every step by which [we] have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."[21] His farewell address affirmed that political prosperity depended on morality rooted in religious principle.

Robert Hogan offers a crisp summary of this changing history of modern legal philosophy. He maintains that two forms of justification continually recur. The first point of view argues that "there are higher laws, unrelated to human legislation, which may be discovered by intuition and reason." People who prefer this foundation "feel that a human law is just if, and only if, it corresponds to or can be derived from the higher laws." Those who take the second viewpoint deny the existence of "higher" laws. Instead, like Jeremy Bentham, they justify their arguments in terms of "the instrumental value of the manifest law as a means for promoting the general welfare of society." They maintain that "laws and political institutions are merely instruments for the realization of the common good; just laws are those which tend on the whole to maximize happiness." Moral imperatives are replaced by relative standards. Hogan concludes that with certain exceptions, the first position has traditionally had the greater influence. During the 20th century, however, America moved away from this tradition.[22]

The effects of this shift in premises now permeates our society. Many of us have become compartmentalists. We adopt conflicting sets of values, perhaps unwittingly, at home, at work, at church. Like a "Jeckyll and Hyde" we behave one way in a given situation and quite the opposite in another situation. We can be found supporting propositions in one setting that in another setting we strongly argue against. A recent study of corporate morality describes this condition: "What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. What is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you. That's what morality is in the corporation."[23]

Unless as citizens we become adequately informed and personally courageous enough to promote and defend our nation's heritage, we can do little to change what is happening. The power is now, as always, in the people. The principles we live are what we teach, and what we teach will shape our future.

The Modern Argument

Numerous writers have expressed the modern argument for rejecting God as a source of standards to guide moral action. They provide persuasive reasons for adopting non-religious social motives to instill ethical behavior. P. D. K. Hall, for example, argues that our current problem exists because the "political revolution of 1776 was not accompanied by a moral one." This left the promise of American life unrealized. Moral inequality prevailed. Hence, Abraham Lincoln's "problem" was that "evangelism, education, benevolent institutions, or moral reform had been only partially successful. The nation was deeply divided."

The core "issue was the relation between 'right principle' and 'self interest'." The post civil war alternative to the moral dilemma was to reject religion and adopt social Darwinism in American higher education. This meant the exclusive acceptance of "social science, economic science, political science, the whole realm of matter." Housing these sciences in the schools and seeing to their public dissemination was considered by modernists the best secular alternative for seeking "higher principles" to create public virtue.[24]

These naturalistic premises are at the foundation of theories developed by Maslow, Raths, Simon, Kohlberg, Fraenkel, and others who have shaped contemporary approaches to values education. The latest extension of this horizontal premise is clearly evident in the 1988 report of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Moral Education in the Life of the School* adopts Emile Durkheim's theory which allows greater flexibility in methodology, but is solidly rooted in horizontal humanism.

Most students, for at least two generations, have not been informed in a way that allows them to exercise free choice on this matter. Contemporary curriculum essentially offers and endorses only the modern naturalistic view. Students are not informed in the schools that vertical religion is a viable alternative to moral questions. The Ten Commandments, for example, are no longer considered legally permissable content in public school curriculum. Personal restraint in moral matters is not clearly defined in modern school books. As early as 1972 Irving Kristol wrote "Already an entire generation exists which simply cannot believe that American school textbooks used to extol 'self-denial' as a virtue."[25] Who can find a single textbook used in today's schools that affirms that man is anything more than merely a physical organism? The story as to why we are where we are is clearly available; the mystery is why that story is so carefully hidden from the rising generation.

Part III
What Can I Do to Foster Traditional American Values?
(Constructive Steps That Make a Difference)

1. Become informed regarding the fundamental nature of the primary documents and principles that sustain your state and national heritage.

A way exists to preserve and promote a public place for values, ethics, morals, and character education rooted in the traditional religious heritage of this nation. Individuals or groups in the United States can look to its fundamental documents for principles and procedures of support. Our nation's nature, history, and social fabric provide abundant resources. But these resources have been largely ignored during the past several decades. Perhaps this condition originated in apathy, but the most significant reason for its present widespread acceptance seems to be unfounded fears regarding the separation of church and state. The public has been successfully intimidated.

The United States of America was founded on the legal premise that people have a relationship and responsibility to a personal God. Those who wish to deny or destroy this concept are a very small minority; they have succeeded in convincing a large proportion of the population that man's relationship to God should not receive public acknowledgement.

False educational ideas like this govern our society. Fear and ignorance should not be the foundations on which we build educational programs. Consider, for example, a straightforward study of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence--An Example of Applying Foundational Documents

A simple exercise clearly illustrates the intent of this document. Consider the answers to the following questions; each formulated using only the words in the Declaration of Independence:

Q. From whom does the Declaration of Independence say mankind receives their rights?
A. "They are endowed by their Creator"
Q. What rights do we receive from the Creator?
A. "Certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."
Q. Why do we have governments?
A. "To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men"
Q. Where do governments derive their just powers?
A. "From the consent of the governed"
Q. From whence does mankind gain title to a "separate and equal station?"
A. "The Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them"
Q. When the people alter or abolish their government to whom should they appeal?
A. "The Supreme Judge of the world"
Q. What should be made clear?
A. "Our intentions"
Q. When should people rebel?
A. "Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it"
Q. On whom should the people rely for protection when they change their form of government?
A. "With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence"

2. Take the necessary steps with state and local boards of education to see that the vertical religious tradition is included in the curriculum of public education.

To maintain its intended identity, our country can find educational and legal support for values and moral education in its national heritage, principles of origin, and its founding documents. This premise is expressed by the phrase: **"Frequent recurrance to fundamental principles is essential to the security of individual rights and perpetuity of free government."**[26] This nation's foundation is seriously jeopardized by educational curriculum that presents only the horizontal, naturalistic interpretations of modernists. Ignoring or deleting the vertical religious premises of the founders is unsound educational policy. When widely held alternative perspectives exist, students should be informed of these views so they can exercise their moral agency to choose between them.

Public programs related to beliefs, values, ethics, morals, or character education programs should include exposure to the *vertical religious tradition.* There is no justifiable legal or social reason for expelling this point of view from education. Its retention is critical to the personal liberty and social welfare of millions of U.S. citizens.

Nevertheless, the trend has been to give the *horizontal naturalistic tradition* exclusive preference in the public sector. The danger is that ***horizontal assumptions by their nature reject the vertical assumptions.*** This should spell caution for those who make public laws and policies. On the other hand, vertical assumptions can include the horizontal position as partially valid. Failure to make this important distinction could lead to a dramatic loss of freedom.

Teachers in pluralistic and democratic societies like the United States should acknowledge the different sources of standards as they discuss moral and ethical values. Intentionally or inadvertantly censoring this type of information can inhibit or restrict the individual's moral agency. Studies of public school textbooks show that information supportive of the vertical view has essentially been removed from modern textbooks.[27]

One way to address this problem is to let students read the beliefs of their progenitors and present parentage. In order to do this we must have access to original documents that reveal these beliefs--pro and con. For example, as illustrated in part I of this document, every state constitution contains language that acknowledges a vertical religious perspective. It is the state constitution that provides authority for public education. Nearly every school has a library. But how many school libraries contain a copy of their state constitution? How many students have ever read the preamble to their state constitution? How many of their teachers have ever read it? It appears that school libraries seldom have a copy of this basic document. State history textbooks refer to their state constitution but rarely contain a copy. If we never see it we are unlikely to know what it contains.

3. Accept and acknowledge the fact that the United States is a Christian nation.

As recently as 1952 the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged that the cultural and legal heritage of the United States "presupposes the existence of a Supreme Being" (Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306, 313). Current studies confirm the long-standing finding of Gallup polls: most Americans report a belief in God, an after life, and identify themselves with a Christian denomination. This finding is consistent with the widely held view of the founders. In the words of Patrick Henry:

> It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.[28]

A recent study, the most extensive ever made of religious identification in the United States, confirms that the United States of America is a Christian nation. The study, released (1991) through the Graduate School of the City University of New York, reports that more than 85 percent of Americans identify with a Christian denomination. Furthermore, most Asian-Americans are not Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus, but Christians. More than half the nation's 1.5 million Arab-Americans are Christians, and most of those who say they are of Irish ancestry are Protestants.

Such findings affirm the voluminous anecdotal evidence provided by hundreds and thousands of immigrants, from the Mayflower passengers of Plymouth through the Ellis Island era: ***a Providential spirit appears to govern in the making of America and the disposition of her inhabitants.*** **From its beginning, many have linked the destiny of this nation to the relationship of its citizens with their Creator.**

Nations, like individuals, become unstable when they deny their own roots. There is ample reason to believe that if the citizenry of this nation denies its cultural heritage and turns away from the traditional God of this Land, who is Jesus Christ, she will cease to be the favored nation described in her national anthems. The movement will be away from constructive pluralism toward destructive factionalism. Factual realities must be clearly and honestly acknowledged by each generation. Failure to do so leads to disorientation, to contentious debate devoid of meaningful resolution. We lose the foundation for positive consensus. And if the foundation is destroyed, what will the people do? (Psalms 11:3).

Endorsing the United States as a Christian nation is no different than acknowledging dominant religious traditions in other nations that mark them as Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or whatever. If we are a Christian nation, we should accept this reality as we accept prevailing religious realities in other nations regardless of our personal preferences. Retaining this integrity is one of our greatest protections as citizens, whether we be Christians or non-Christians. It is the widespread commitment to the biblical principles of a common brotherhood and divinely instilled tolerance that has sustained America. To subvert or overthrow this moral foundation--the fundamental principles

inherent in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount--will inevitably end in confusion and civil disorder. Alexis de Toqueville acknowledged America's dependence on her religious heritage long ago. It would be well not to ignore it today.

4. Think and act in terms of the rule rather than the exceptions described by law.

In the American republic the government only has those powers which the people give to it; the power of the *general rule* remains with the people. This power is lost when the people begin to think and act primarily in terms of *legal exceptions*. Educators, citizens, and lawyers are increasingly responding to social issues in terms of specific legal decisions, which are *exceptions to the rule*. In doing this they disengage themselves from their own heritage and lose the use of its preserving power. The consequences include (a) lawsuits and fears of lawsuits nurtured by an unfounded paranoia among citizens, educators, and attorneys and (b) a needless expelling of moral and religious content from the public curriculum by intimidated teachers and administrators.

While the Court has ruled in specific cases that giving a prescribed prayer in school or posting the Ten Commandments on a classroom wall is inappropriate, this does not mean all religious and moral reference should be expelled from education. Adequately informed citizens can be free from fear and ignorance to act in a positive, confident manner.

5. Act to legally establish policies and procedures that explicitly preserve the American heritage in school curricula. An apathetic defense will not preserve this heritage. A united offense may.

The American majority has largely lost many of its freedoms. They wrongly assumed that freedoms inherent in cultural traditions, such as the belieft that man has a spiritual and physical nature, a conscience independent of his environment, the inherent ability to exercise free choice, and divinely bestowed rights would remain without protection. One may have safely assumed these freedoms in the 1800s, but this changed when American education switched its basic assumptions at the turn of this century. This caused the legal community to redefine the origin of rights and the nature of judicial review.

The rules have changed and now the strategies for concerned citizens must be modified. If the general public continues to rely on a defensive posture (doing nothing) in matters of policy and law, the advantage will shift to the tiny minority who act offensively (lobby and file lawsuits) to legally change the status quo. The place to begin is with local boards of education. The focus of educational policy should be rooted in the contextual language of state constitutions that preserve and promote our American heritage, not in the changing theories of the academic community.

6. Establish educational policy on the basis of community ideals, not on community norms or practices.

When both the public and professional educators allow current social practices to become the standards for educational decision-making, a form of paralysis occurs in the public school program. In contrast, when we strive for higher ideals in standards related to achievement, dress, deportment, language etc., a tension for change from what is to what might be is created. If we accept whatever is socially current in fashions, conduct, and attitudes, we prevent the educational enterprise from lifting and edifying the community. Humanity is a growth enterprise; improvement is the aim; what *ought to be* must take precedence over *what is*. In educational matters unless our reach exceeds our grasp our destiny is social decay. The standards by which to determine what ought to be are clearly identified in the vertical religious heritage of the nation.

7. Hire teachers who are models of the moral virtues you feel your students should acquire.

Research associated with values acquisition shows the powerful influence of modeling. The most effective educational system, is therefore, a model of the morality it desires its students to acquire. Hiring personnel capable of conveying the desired values may not be as easy to do as it

once was, but it is fundamental. Early in this century states vouched for personal character in the teacher certification process. The teacher's name on the certificate was followed by the phrase "a person of high moral character." This is no longer the case, but districts can still screen those they hire to fit the objectives stipulated by their policies. These policies can reflect the ideals of the American heritage.

8. Use curriculum consistent with the national heritage.

Curriculum consistent with a school board's desires can be created and will be produced by educators and publishers who serve the market when the demand is clearly expressed. Textbooks, outlines, and philosophies that reject the moral ideals of our American heritage should be eliminated and replaced with those that allow students to see the options and to understand the principles our founders endorsed as best suited to perpetuate a free republic. Boards of education can act to provide this type of curriculum for the schools under their jurisdiction.

9. Let the process of learning remain under the student's control and under the influence of the home and church.

This means the school establishes appropriate standards and teaches the prescribed curriculum but lets the student--

(a) Discern its meaning.
(b) Determine his/her personal responsibility.
(c) Make a personal investment or commitment.
(d) Express this commitment in action.
(e) Evaluate the consequences of his/her personal performance.

The agency of the individual should be honored. In the final analysis, values are created by the free expression of our desires within the context of clearly understood standards. They are a natural consequence of participating in the everyday life of the educational institution. A specific class on values or morals is unnecessary when the entire program is based on correct principles. A sense of right and wrong reflecting the community *ideals* will pervade the entire educational enterprise.

This does not mean the student is freed from obedience to standards. Not at all. As the school comes to represent a model of the ideals associated with the American heritage, the student learns to accept definite standards with rewards and punishments. When a student's family and church also show ideals consistent with our national heritage, their moral development is heightened. To the extent students rebel against these standards, they must be allowed to reap the consequences.

10. Pursue those objectives that the Constitution seeks to promote and preserve.

Educators can pursue those aims that that would be in harmony with a constitutional context. Both teachers and students can work to these specific ends, for example:

1. *Freedom to act:* Affirming the feeling of agency by experiencing the opportunity to make choices.
2. *Self-identity:* Acquiring a positive confirmation of who we are and what we are capable of doing and becoming.
3. *Self-discipline:* Exposure to personalities, rules, and principles that elicit self-control and individual governance.
4. *Mutual respect:* Promoting the disposition to treat others as we would like to be treated.
5. *Self-development:* Experiencing growth through acquiring and demonstrating proficiency in knowledge and skills that contribute to personal and social satisfaction.
6. *Personal responsibility:* Preserving and protecting the rights, properties, and privileges of all individuals.
7. *Self-reliance:* Exerting sufficient creativity, labor, and frugality to sustain one's self and his or her personal dependents.

Conclusion

It has long been recognized that when good men and women do nothing, less than the best will prevail. The present situation regarding values, morality, and religion in the school is set to test the courage of good men and women nationwide. If present trends in American schools continue, we may completely lose our freedom to legally express a vertical religious preference in all phases of society. If this traditional view is lost, the values and moral order that accompany it will also disappear. The insecurity of situational ethics will prevail; we will no longer enjoy the protective order and stability that come with a commitment to moral imperatives.

Presently, we face a number of options. Among these options there will be those who--

(a) Accept the modern naturalist position, promoting and maintaining its influence.
(b) Ignore the fundamental conflict underlying values discussions and apathetically base their actions on prevailing rhetoric or fears of litigation.
(c) Recognize the problem but refuse to act, convinced that the traditional heritage will continue without the need for our personal action.
(d) Understand the problem but allow themselves to be intimidated, fearing to put social acceptance on the line by speaking out.
(e) Understand the problem and who speak and act in ways that preserve the students' right to hear *both sides* appropriately presented so they can make informed choices.
(f) Reject the modern naturalistic position and fight to see it banned from school curriculum.

The questions we all face are: which of these positions describes me? and am I pleased with the consequences that are likely to follow my choice? I favor option "e". We need to strive to understand the problem and then speak and act in ways that preserves the students' right to hear both sides appropriately presented so they can make informed choices.

Our communities appear to lack a clear vision capable of creating a consensus on basic values. Education suffers because of this deficiency in moral order. Where there is agreement it is usually tentative, and where there is disagreement it seems to be significant. A common response to problems in contemporary education is to argue about a lack of dollars, materials, and facilities. But the most fundamental issue we face cannot be resolved simply by allocating more money, newer books and technology, and better facilities. The need to free ourselves from following conflicting value structures is evident. We would do well to free ourselves from the idea that the foundations of right and wrong can be different at home, at school, and at work. The current doctrine that all value choices may be correct--depending on the period, place, and people is counter productive. It needs to be replaced with principles of right and wrong that transcend personal desires or social norms. These principles are available. The challenge is to rise above the earthbound theory that has dominated the twentieth century. Education's greatest need is for leaders and followers who will accomplish this.

Endnotes

1. Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (N.Y.: MacMillan Co., 1929), pp. 143-44.
2. See also Paul C. Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Servant Books: Ann Arbor, Mich., 1986) for a comprehensive analysis of 90 contempory public school textbooks. *Looking at History: A Review of Major U. S. History Textbooks* (People for the American Way Textbook Review Series, O. L. Davis, editor, 1986) corroborates the Vitz study. Neil J. Flinders, "Public School Textbooks: Reflections of a Shift in the Philosophical Foundations of American Education," *Philosophy of Education Proceedings, FWPES*, 1986 cites additional studies related to this topic.
3. Detailed information on teaching about religion in the public schools is available from the National Council on Religion and Public Education, Iowa State University, N155 Lagomarcino Hall, Ames, Iowa 50011; the National Council for the Social Studies, 3501 Newark St., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20016; and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.
4. See James L. Thrower, *The Alternative Tradition: Religion and the Rejection of Religion in the Ancient World*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1980); Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (N.Y.:

Houghton-Mifflin, 1926), vol. 1:8-22; F. L. Baumer, *Religion and the Rise of Skepticism* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1960; James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore, Mass.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

5. *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences,* Summer 1980 (Theme: The End of Consensus).

6. Gregg R. Johnson, "Curriculum Objectives of States That Do and Do Not Mandate Moral Education," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brigham Young University College of Education, 1990.

7. See, for example, chart in L. J. Stiles and B. D. Johnson (eds.), *Morality Examined: Guidelines for Teachers* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Book Co., 1977), p. 53.

8. George C. S. Benson and Thomas S. Engeman, *Amoral America* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, Hoover Institution Press, 1975), p. 1.

9. Neil J. Flinders, *Teach the Children: An Agency Approach to Education* (BM Research Foundation; Provo, Utah, 1990), p. 242.

10. See A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985), pp. 4-5.

11. Ibid., p. 348.

12. See *Iconoclast*, March and April issues, 1870. Available at Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah and Brown University Library, Providence, Mass.

13. See Humanist Manifesto I, item #5 and Humanist Manifesto II item # 1 respectively.

14. Daniel Kulp, *Educational Sociology* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932), pp. 20-30. A similar shift occurred in the entertainment industry. Compare Charles S. Aaronson (ed.), *The Production Code*, 1930, in *International Motion Picture Alamanac*, 1966 with *Rules and Regulations of the Classification and Rating Administration*, in *International Motion Picture Almanac*, 1982.

15. From *Man and Crises*, quoted in George Charles Roche III, *The Bewildered Society* (N.Y.: Arlington House, 1972), p. 11.

16. See, for example, D. Yankelovich, "New Rules in American Life" as abstracted for *Psychology Today*, April 1981, pp. 35-91; M. Harris, *Why America Changed: Our Cultural Crises* (Simon and Schuster, 1981).

17. J. R. Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast By Our Constitution*, p. 96.

18. See *The Second American Revolution* (Elgin Ill.: David C. Cook Pub., 1982), p. 213, and the Foreword, respectively.

19. Christopher Wolfe, *The Rise of Modern Judicial Review: From Constitutional Interpretation to Judge-made Law* (N.Y.: Basic Books Inc., 1986), p. 3.

20. Matthew M. F. Hilton, "The Contextual Framework of the U.S. Supreme Court 1790-1987," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1989, pp. 20, 68-77.

21. George Washington's First Inaugural Address, April 30, 1979. See *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1961, p. 2.

22. "Moral Conduct and Moral Character: A Psychological Perspective," *Psychological Bulletin*, 79, no. 4, April 1973, p. 224.

23. Robert Jackall, *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 6.

24. See P. D. K. Hall, *The Organization of American Culture, 1700-1900*, 1982. In the early 1900s John Dewey devised a secular "religion" *A Common Faith*, 1930 and also a theory of moral development based on *reflective thinking* rather than embracing *moral imperatives*. See J. Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education*, 1909; *Democracy and Education*, 1916; *Theory of Valuation*, 1939.

25. Irving Kristol, *On the Democratic Idea in America* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 27.

26. See, for example, Massachusetts Bill of Rights; Virginia Declaration of Rights; Utah Constitution (Declaration of Rights), Art. 1, Sec. 27.

27. See, for example, Paul C. Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1986); O. L. Davis Jr., et. al., *Looking at History: A Review of Major U. S. History Textbooks* (Washington, D.C.: People for the American Way, 1986).

28. Quoted in David Barton, *The Myth of Separation* (Wallbuilder Press: Aledo, Tex., 1989), p. 25. Also in Steve C. Dawson, *God's Providence in America's History* (Calif.: Steve C. Dawson, 1988), p. 6.

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